SOCIAL SPACE KAYMAKKIN

MANIFESTO

EN

How it started

Kaymakkin opened its doors in the spring of 2015.

In the beginning, it was a project of antiauthoritarian group Sispirosi Atakton, but it was welcomed and supported by the wider scene, and eventually people outside the original group joined in the managing of the space. When it opened, Kaymakkin was the only radical social space in Lefkosia, drawing knowledge and inspiration from other projects before it, such as Kardash, Arsinois 5, Fanari tou Diogeni, Steki Sapfous, Occupy the Buffer Zone and Steki Arsinois. It hosted a variety of events, but perhaps more importantly, it offered a space for people interested in radical theory and action to meet and organise. Presentations, discussions, collective kitchens, screenings, yoga and self-defense classes, photography exhibitions and theatrical performances were some of the events held at the space, alongside the Genders & Power festival, one of the first public appearances of radical queer theory and practice in southern Cyprus. A library and an archive also found their home at Kaymakkin. The space brought together greek-cypriot and turkish-cypriot groups, migrant groups, women and LGBTQ+ individuals, allowing ideas to ferment and actions to emerge, and also welcomed a Zapatistas delegation that visited Cyprus in 2021. The political context of the island will continue to change, and we believe Kaymakkin will remain an important locale for everyone in the city who dreams of better futures.

Why we do this

Kaymakkin offers a roof to autonomous and antiauthoritarian approaches to resistance and liberation. We live under the rule of capitalism. The dominant social structures and relations around us are exploitative and oppressive. Kaymakkin operates in the rich tradition of social centers, where people work collectively to imagine ways to resist and subvert the reality that we have inherited. We stand together against the ideologies imposed by state, capital, and institutional politics. Our understanding of these topics drives us to function in specific ways, which we believe are important to share and develop together with people who use and support the space.

Kaymakkin is a political space: it is part of a community that comes together to resist the barbarism of capitalism and authority. In the words of Audre Lorde, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." At Kaymakkin we organize and support political action from below, and choose not to collaborate with institutional bodies (people are not their jobs but no sympathy for cops). We work with a DIY ethos, and host projects that are self-organised, self-funded, horizontal, and work against logics of hierarchy.

Kaymakkin is located in Kaimakli, a working class neighbourhood with a rich history of resistance. We value interaction within the neighbourhood and aim at contributing to a culture of mutual respect, inclusivity and collective empowerment. Similar to how Kaymakkin operates internally, we want to create external relationships based on horizontality, encouraging an environment where diverse voices are heard and communal bonds are strengthened.

We are surrounded by divisions: by class, race, gender, sexuality...

We want people who come to Kaymakkin to feel free and comfortable to express their true self, and wear whatever clothes, accessories, and makeup they want. We want people to feel at home, no matter what languages they speak or where they come from. We understand that it is not always so easy to accomplish this, but we try our best and will continue to do so. We encourage everyone to contribute with feedback and ideas to keep Kaymakkin a safer space.

In a world where everything can be bought and sold, we try to operate outside and against commercial logics. We volunteer our time and energy to Kaymakkin because we believe it is an important resource. And while we do labour for Kaymakkin, we are not employees and do not receive salaries. We do not want to reproduce the relation of worker-customer, so we ask our friends to help us in taking care of the space by being respectful and cleaning up after themselves. We operate on collective contributions to the space - whether that be time, skills, or money - so the space is accessible to everyone (except for fascists, cops, sexists, homophobes, racists... you get the idea) regardless of their financial situation. Kaymakkin is a working class space where we donate what we can and support each other. No one who hosts events benefits from them in terms of personal profit, as we want any proceeds to support Kaymakkin or other projects that are housed or hosted by the space, and contribute to building a vibrant and rebellious political community.

If you have questions or want to raise an issue feel free to find us offline or online.

How we do it

Kaymakkin is a self-organised space managed by a horizontally operating collective. This means that any decisions on the activities we host and all of the cleaning, shopping and decorating of the space are done by the collective, with the valuable help of friends and comrades (and cats) of Kaymakkin. We don't like giving orders and we dont like taking them. We work together, in a collective and comradely spirit to discuss, negotiate and finalise decisions and plans about the space.

We are conscious of implicit hierarchies that are always present and try to overcome them to the best of our ability.

We have assemblies (i.e. group meetings) usually twice a month, and this is where the decisions are made. We function by consensus rather than democratic voting, and all decisions made are agreed upon unanimously. This way of operation is essential to our vision: we are a group of equals who respect each other, and we reject leaders and majority rule. Consensus decision-making means that opinions held by a minority within the collective are never ignored, and that we have discussions to solve any problems that arise. Through these processes we try to encourage participation and equalising power as tools to build community and empower the individuals within it. If this way of working was scaled up, we think it could help achieve a more fair and equal society.

Kaymakkin as an assembly ascribes to a specific theory of political change, that of radical self-organised action. This means that the space works with and promotes grassroots groups and collectives that work without funding and institutional support. We prefer not to give (political or physical) space to organisations and projects with funding from dominant structures (i.e. the state, the EU, foundations). Even so, we recognise that this is not a strict binary, and that in some cases there is no radical voice that represents specific social groups or fights for specific causes. Therefore, regarding collaboration with more formal organisations, we decide as an assembly on a case by case basis, based on whether our interests align and whether there is an opportunity to create productive relationships that may advance our political aims.

Finally, Kaymakkin is a vegan space. Practically, we do not prevent anyone from bringing their non-vegan snacks and food, however the food prepared for our collective kitchens and events is vegan. Animal bodies of all species, including humans, are exploited and commodified under the present socieconomic system. As a social space that advocates for the total liberation of all individuals, Kaymakkin collectively operates as a vegan and anti-speciesist space. This also means you are welcome to bring your non-human companions to the space when visiting.

Nicosia, November 2025
Printed by Tatses Press